CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S HISTORY MONTH
Highlighting Legendary VUU Women
HIGHLIGHTING LEGENDARY VUU WOMEN:

CELEBRATING THE “MOTHER OF VUU”, MRS. MARY LUMPKIN

“Virginia Union University is grateful for Mary Lumpkin “Mother of VUU” who lived 1832-1905. Mrs. Lumpkin provided space at the former Lumpkin’s Slave Jail, known as the Devil’s Half-Acre, to give newly emancipated slaves an opportunity for education and advancement. That space was turned into God’s Half-Acre and birthed Virginia Union University.”

The American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS) arranged for the first classes to be held inside the former Lumpkin’s Slave Jail. Mrs. Mary Lumpkin, a former slave, inherited the property from her owner turned husband, and provided the space to be used. Eventually, the ABHMS founded four institutions (Richmond Theological Seminary, Wayland Seminary, Hartshorn Memorial College, and Storer College) that would later merge to form the “Union” that gives Virginia Union University its name.

The drive that loops around the campus from the Lombardy Street entrance to the Graham Street security gate has been named in her honor, Mary Lumpkin Drive. A landmark stone was also dedicated and placed beside the street sign outside the Baptist Memorial Building.

HIGHLIGHTING LEGENDARY VUU WOMEN:

BESSY JEANNE BANKS-BEARDEN

Bessy Jeanne Banks-Bearden is a graduate of the Hartshorn Memorial College and is most notably known as a political, civic and social activist. In 1922 Bearden was elected to the New York City Board of Education serving as Chair of the 12th District, the first black women to ever be elected. She would go on to be named deputy collector in internal revenue for the Third New York Collection District, the first African-American appointed to that position. In the late 1930s, Bearden would become a active member of the Democratic Party founding the Colored Women’s Democratic League for the state of New York, which would give her the support she needed in order to be elected delegate the First Judicial District Convention aligning her with the National Council of Negro Women serving alongside Mary McLeod Bethune. While serving with the National Council of Negro Women, Bearden chaired the New York State Committee to Abolish the Poll Tax and was on the executive board of the New York Urban League.
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~Felicia Johnson, VUu’s FiRSt Woman aThletic DirectoR~

Felicia Johnson came to Virginia Union University in the late 90s from Mappsville, Virginia. After graduating in the top 20% of her high school class, she arrived to VUU with hopes of dominating both athletically and academically. As a three-sport athlete (softball, volleyball, and bowling) Johnson was a multiple all conference award recipient and led the CIAA in batting average from her sophomore year, until she graduated all while maintaining residency on the Dean List (+3.0 GPA).

Having an immense love for sports, Johnson declared a biology major with aspirations of becoming a physical therapist, but ultimately received her undergraduate degree in Business Administration with a concentration in Information Systems.

Upon graduating, Johnson initially began working in the banking and finance industry before a brief stint in information technology. The urge to work in the sporting industry was too great to ignore. Johnson took a leap of faith and began classes at Virginia Commonwealth University. She went on to receiving her Master of Science in Sport Administration May 2007 graduating Magna Cum Laude.

Looking for an opportunity to begin her career in athletics, Johnson returned to the place she was most familiar with. “I was just trying to get my foot in the door and figure out how I could work in athletics,” said Johnson. The position for Director of Compliance was available at VUU and Athletic Director Michael Bailey, gave me an opportunity.”

For collegiate athletics, the compliance coordinator is the pulse of the department. The primary functions of the compliance office are to administer, monitor, and verify the accurate completion of NCAA required documentation, to assist in maintaining institutional compliance with NCAA rules, and reporting infractions or violations of rules to the NCAA. With nearly 350 member institutions the NCAA uses compliance ensures that all their constituents are playing by the same rules. The rules are ever evolving; therefore, compliance plays a key role in the governance of those rules.

Johnson dedicated 12 years to her role in compliance, of which, the last half have fallen under the administration of Hall of Fame Inductee, Coach Joseph D. Taylor. Taylor has a career record of 233-96-4 with four different programs — Howard, Virginia Union, Hampton and Florida A&M. His winning percentage of .706 is ninth among all FCS coaches and 20th in Division I. Since taking over as Athletic Director Coach Taylor has overseen 7 Conference Championships (3 Women’s Basketball, 3 Cross Country, and 1 men’s basketball.)

With the growth of the athletic department, Joseph Taylor was appointed to Vice President of Intercollegiate Athletics. On May 1st, 2019, Johnson was promoted to Athletic Director of Virginia Union University. Currently, of the 42 colleges and universities in the state of Virginia with athletic programs, Johnson becomes the third women of color to hold the position (Peggy Davis, VSU & Carla Williams UVA), and the first in the history of Virginia Union.

Moving forward, Johnson is focused on two primary objectives, increasing graduation rates and updating facilities on campus. “Of course we want to focus on graduation rates but we don’t want to stop there,” said Johnson. “We want to ensure that our students have a holistic experience during their time at Virginia Union and a lot of that has to do with the time utilized away from athletics. We constantly encourage and assist our student athletes with internships and volunteer opportunities that will provide hands-on job training experiences. We don’t want our students to graduate and have to figure life out, we want to send them into the professional world equipped with the experience that employers will be looking for.”

“As far as facilities, we continue to make strides every day. When you go to the football games you notice the new scoreboard and how we’ve improved the landscape surrounding the stadium. The gym floor was recently replaced, development talks are continuously happening and we plan on making some major upgrades in the near future.”

Johnson looks forward to carrying on the rich and winning traditions of Virginia Union University Athletics.
RICHMOND 34 FLYING HIGH WITH THE SQUIRRELS

To commemorate 62 years since the Richmond 34’s sit-in, the Richmond Flying Squirrels will honor the life and legacy of the 34 Virginia Union students who stared injustice in the eye and refused to back down.

Encouraged by recent news of sit-ins staged in Greensboro, NC, students at Virginia Union knew they too had to make a stand against racial injustice as well. Not long after hearing of the Greensboro sit-ins, the campus hosted civil rights icon, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King. King would be housed in the Baptist Memorial Building on campus, which once served as the president’s mansion at VUU. During his stay, King inspired, encouraged and empowered students to take a stand against desegregation and to fight for the rights that had been dawned upon them at birth.

More than 200 students would parade from Virginia Union down Broad street toward modern day shockoe bottom. Step by step the students sung spirituals and prepared for the battle of which they inched toward one step at a time. Once arrived at the Thalhimers Department Store, they began to fill in the whites only sections of the lunch counter within Thalhimers.

Surrounded by an angry mob, the students were called racial slurs, spit at, and assaulted, yet, the students held their ground. In total, 34 students got arrested. To ensure the students release, the university president used his personal home as collateral to pay the students bail to have them released from the Richmond city jail.

For years following the arrest, each of the students would be in tangled in a legal battle that made its way to the US Supreme Court. The cases against each of the students would finally be overturned in 1963. The next year, in 1964, the Civil Rights Act would be passed, outlawing discrimination based on race, religion, sex, color, or national origin.

Fast forward to February of 2021 Richmond Squirrels CEO Todd “Parney” Parnell wanted to make a bigger impact when it came to highlighting these 34 hometown heroes, in an effort to show solidarity and unity throughout the city of Richmond.

In a ceremony held at the diamond on Wednesday, February 24th Pernell, on behalf of the Flying Squirrels made a number of announcements. The first being the retirement of the number 34. The only other number in Squirrels franchise history to be retired is 42, in honor of Jackie Robinson.

In addition to the jersey retirement, the Flying Squirrels have erected a Legacy Mural on the exterior of the stadium that can be seen from Arthur Ashe Boulevard and south-bound interstate 95. The mural stretches 100 feet wide and 20 feet tall, was created by Mr.
Andre Shank, a Richmond-based painter and sculptor who has mastered the art of large-scale works across multiple mediums. The mural will become a staple for the Diamond, much like the Native American Chief that used to protrude from the stadium corridor prior to the team being sold in 2008. The mural will also be featured annually during the Flying Squirrels “Richmond 34 Legacy Weekend”. The Legacy Weekend will begin this year to celebrate the contributions of the Richmond 34 to the Civil Rights Movement in addition to other local leaders both past and present who have contributed to the fight for social justice and racial equality.

The game that falls on Legacy Weekend will have the Squirrel players dawning the Richmond 34 Legacy jerseys which will be auctioned off. The auction proceeds will go toward scholarships that will support students attending Virginia Union University or Virginia State University. Students from the two universities will also be offered an opportunity to gain professional experience working with the organization in various capacities. The programs will be designed to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce with the goal of elevating more minorities into leadership positions throughout the professional baseball industry.

To close out the ceremony, The Flying Squirrels named Virginia Union alum Elizabeth Johnson Rice was named Community Ambassador for the organization. Rice was one of the VUU students who participated in the 1960 sit-ins at the Thalhimers Department store. Rice has dedicated her life to fighting for social justice and equality as well as preserving the history of the Richmond 34.

HIGHLIGHTING LEGENDARY VUU WOMEN:
ROSELYN M. BROCK

Roslyn M. Brock is a 2009 graduate of Virginia Union University. Elected unanimously, Brock serves as the National Board Chairman for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) as the Chairman Emeritus. Brock became the youngest person to have ever held the seat while also becoming just the fourth woman to be elected.

Recognized as a health policy advocate, Brock is also the Chief Advocacy Officer for Bon Secours Mercy Health. In her role, Brock oversees 43 hospitals in 7 states and more than 57,000 employees providing and promoting health care reform, population based health, health equity and social justice initiatives for vulnerable populations.
HIGHLIGHTING LEGENDARY VUU WOMEN: 
DR. LUCILLE M. BROWN

In a decorated 38-year career with Richmond Public Schools, Dr. Lucille Brown served as a teacher, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. Although now retired, Dr. Brown still dedicates much of her time and attention toward advocating for students and education. From witnessing the desegregation of schools to having a school building erected in her name, Dr. Brown has been a catalyst for change and educational empowerment in the African American community for more than a half century.

As an alum, Dr. Brown has single handedly been a pipeline between students in Richmond Public Schools and Virginia Union for just as long. At the annual Lucille Brown Youth Bowl, hundreds of students from Richmond Public Schools attend a Saturday filled with VUU festivities. Students from RPS get an opportunity to listen to speakers, interact with the VUU students, meet university employees, and attend a VUU football game. Despite all the fun and activities the students enjoy, the Youth Bowl is an enrichment experience with many of the students getting to experience the college experience for the first time.

Dr. Brown received her BS from Virginia Union University and her master’s degree from Howard, with additional post-certificates from the University of Virginia, University of Richmond, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Virginia State University. She was awarded two honorary doctorate from Virginia State University and the University of Richmond for her legacy in the field of Education.

Dr. Brown currently sits on the Board of Trustees at Virginia Union and is an integral part of the VUU family!
UPCOMING EVENTS

DIVERSIFYING THE TEACHER PIPELINE: The Role of HBCUs

MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2021 | 4:30 - 6:00 PM EDT

A presentation by Dr. Kai Mathews
CA Educator Diversity Project Director
Center for the Transformation of Schools, UCLA

A presentation by Dr. Erica DeCuir
Associate Professor of Teacher Education
Albany State University School of Education

PANEL DISCUSSION moderated by Dr. Erica DeCuir

Dr. Kimberly Guitars-White
Dean, Faculty of Education, Virginia Union University

Dr. Felicia Mayfield
Associate Professor & Chair of Curriculum & Instruction
Clark Atlanta University School of Education

Randall Seriguchi, Jr., Esq.
Executive Director, Urban Ed Academy

REGISTER ONLINE: diversifyingtheteacherpipeline.splashthat.com

OUR FAMILY IS OUR FUTURE

ONCE A PANTHER
ALWAYS A PANTHER!

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Virginia Union University presents:

PRAYERCALL

Thursdays at 11:00 A.M.
Open to all
Dial: 804.521.9510
Conference ID: 166008

Virginia Union University presents:

She Means Business Part 1

A woman-led dialogue about entrepreneurship and leadership.

PANELISTS:

Rasheeda Crighton, Co-founder
Jackson Ward Collective

Melody Short, Co-founder
Jackson Ward Collective

Kelli Lemon, Co-founder
Jackson Ward Collective

MODERATOR:
Ricky Parker, Executive Director
Ruth Coles Harris Leadership Institute

STVU

Saturdays at 12N EST

Join us for our chapel services! VUU TV

Virginia Union University

CHAPEL SERVICE

Innovation - Spiritual Formation - Integrity - Diversity & Inclusion - Excellence

Thursdays at 12N EST
UPCOMING EVENTS

IN.S.I.D.E. VUU
WITH DR. ALLIA L. CARTER, EVP/COO

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP
In Honor of International Women’s History Month

TUESDAY, MARCH 30TH
6:00 PM EST

Ms. Khasha L. Pope
Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management

Ms. Felicia Johnson
Director of Athletics

Ms. Jessica Gilhart
Director of Student Engagement

Ms. Felicia Cazy
Director of Government & Community Relations

Ms. Deborah Alston
Director of Alumni & Development Services

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COVID-19 & BLACK COMMUNITY TRUST IN SCIENCE

PANELISTS:

Yvonne L. Brown, PhD
Assistant Professor of Health and Human Performance, and African American Studies, University of Illinois at Champaign

Wyatt D. Wilson, PhD
Assistant Professor of Health and Physical Education, Virginia Commonwealth University

Karl T. Jackson Sr., PhD
Dean, School of Natural Resources and Environment, University of Michigan

Gerard McPherson, PhD
Assistant Professor of Economics, Virginia Union University

MEDIATOR:

Clint V. Tidway IV
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of African American History and Culture, Virginia Union University

THURSDAY APRIL 1
3:00 PM - 4:30 PM EDT

SEE LINK TO REGISTER FOR WEBINAR VIA ZOOM

SAVE THE DATE

2021 NATIONAL ALUMNI CONVENTION
Mark your calendars for this virtual event!
June 24 - 27, 2021

SAVING THE DATES

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY WORSHIP
FRIDAY, APRIL 23, 2021
6:30 PM - 8:00 PM

LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
SATURDAY, APRIL 24, 2021
8:30 AM - 3:00 PM

COMMENCEMENT 2021
MAY 8
JALYNN HODGES
2019–2020 STUDENT TRUSTEE

Jalynn Hodges took the campus by storm as a voice for her peers as a part of the Student Government Association. The senior from Hampton, VA aspires to be a Medical Doctor. During her freshman summer, Hodges was selected to take part in an internship at Meharry Medical College, which would serve as a bridge program with acceptance into the MD program upon her completion at Virginia Union.

In the classroom, Hodges is a stellar scholar with the opportunity to graduate magna cum laude. Outside of the classroom, she fights for the longevity and sustainability of HBCUs. Most recently, Hodges spoke on Capitol Hill to argue on behalf of government funding of Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Hodges first opportunity was during the previous senate funding bill hearing for minority institutions, which expired in September of 2019. The fund was established in 2008 specifically for schools that primarily educate minority students: tribal colleges, Hispanic-serving institutions, and historically black colleges/universities.

Hodges took the Senate Floor and opened her powerful speech candidly speaking about her experience at Virginia Union. She spoke of her personal experience as well as how the university uses the funding to support the dreams of students like her, and why it’s necessary for minority serving institutions to continue to receive funding. Eventually, in late 2020, the funding bill was signed into law guaranteeing minority-serving institutions receive the funding they need annually.

Among the number of accomplishments Hodges has achieved, she made history by becoming the first active student to become a Board of Trustee Member. The Virginia Union University Board of Trustees has committed to the success and uplifting of everything VUU. More specifically, the Board of Trustees is the governing body of the university. Trustees are entrusted with responsibilities such as approving the university’s mission, strategic goals, establishing policies. While the Board primary focus is the operation of the university as a whole, each member represents a subdivision of the university.

To date, Hodges is on the front line in the battle against Covid. She is currently working full time in a lab testing and analyzing COVID-19 specimens. In her spare time Hodges has begun volunteering with a crisis hotline providing emotional support for individuals facing personal challenges.

HIGHLIGHTING LEGENDARY VUU WOMEN:
BISHOP LEONTINE T.C. KELLY

Bishop Leontine T.C. Kelly, is commonly described as a religious leader pioneer. Following a career as a social studies teacher, mother and wife to a Methodist Minister. Upon her husband’s death, Kelly chose to follow her own call to ministry.

Among her many accomplishments, Kelly became the first African American woman to be elected bishop in her denomination. She served as bishop of the California-Nevada Annual Conference and as president of the Western Jurisdiction College of Bishops. She was the chief administrative officer and spiritual leader of more than 100,000 United Methodists in California and Nevada.
Virginia Union University presents the **ALUMNI TOWN HALL MEETINGS WITH THE DEANS**

**School of Arts and Sciences**
- Thursday, April 1, 2021 | 6:00 pm
- Meeting ID: 979 5348 4707
- Passcode: 397081

**Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology**
- Thursday, April 8, 2021 | 6:00 pm
- Meeting ID: 955 2097 0646
- Passcode: 077886

All meetings held via Zoom

**VAUNION HOMECOMING**
- October 9, 2021

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